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March 18, 2014

Kevin Bell, Chairman
Human Services Council
c/o Department of Administration for Human Services
12011 Government Center Parkway, Suite 942
Fairfax, Virginia 22035

Dear Mr. Bell:

Today County Executive Ed Long presented to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, at their request, a list of reductions to the FY 2015 Advertised Budget. One of the proposed reductions eliminates the \$1.3 million that had been included in the Community Services Board's FY 2015 budget to provide day support and employment services for an estimated 74 June 2014 special education graduates who currently do not have a funding source for services.

These funds pay for important habilitation and employment services for individuals with intellectual disability, including the following:

- **Developmental service programs** that help individuals maintain an optimal level of functioning and reduce the degree of impairment or dependency. Services develop or enhance the following skills: self-care and hygiene, eating, toileting, task learning, community resource utilization, environmental and behavioral skills, medication management, and transportation.
- **Sheltered employment programs** that provide work for individuals with disabilities who are not ready, are unable, or choose not to enter into competitive employment in an integrated setting. This service also includes the development of social, personal, and work-related skills.
- **Supported employment programs** that provide work for three to eight individuals per job site in an integrated setting. "Integrated setting" means that individuals have opportunities in the immediate work setting for regular contact with non-disabled individuals who are not providing support services. Individuals may be employed by the employer or by the vendor of supported employment services, and ongoing support services are provided.
- **Individual placement programs** that provide work to an individual placed in an integrated work setting in the community. Ongoing support services may include transportation, job site training, counseling, advocacy, and other supports provided in accordance with the individual's written rehabilitation plan. Supports may be provided by an employment specialist, the employee's coworkers, or other qualified individuals.
- Other services may include nursing services, physical therapy, art and music therapy, and transportation to and from job sites.

Additional funding for these services ensures that this year's special education graduates and their families would be able to make a smooth transition from school to community services without having to be placed on a wait list. Its elimination would disrupt the smooth transition and negatively impact the graduates, their families, and our contracted service providers.

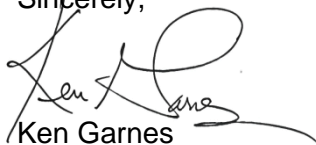
Specific consequences include the following:

- Effective July 1, 2014, the CSB will have to initiate a wait list for access to employment and day support services. This will include approximately 74 individuals (June 2014 special education graduates) who will have to wait for approved funding to access these important services.
- A gap in services can detrimentally affect these young individuals -- therapeutically, emotionally, physically and financially. Gaps in services can cause individuals to lose skills that have been acquired working with the county schools' staff in preparation for moving on to adult employment and day services upon graduation. Many of this year's graduates need specialized and individualized services such as nursing, occupational therapy and physical therapy that they now receive in school and could continue to receive through selected CSB service providers.
- Instituting a wait list due to lack of funding may negatively impact families. Many families have shared with their elected supervisors and in public meetings the hardships they will face if their son or daughter has to remain at home while waiting to access services. According to previous testimony, a gap in service causes financial hardships for families who do not have the financial means to hire someone to care for their son or daughter. In some cases, a parent will have to quit their job to care for their child while waiting for services to be available.
- The wait list and lack of funding negatively impacts 17 contracted providers of employment and day support services in our community who will be unable to prepare to serve the 74 new graduates. Some service providers are proactively preparing to increase their capacity to serve the June 2014 graduates, but that capacity increase is dependent on funding. Lack of funds will impede their ability to increase physical space and hire and train additional staff (as required by legal mandates and best practice standards). This situation negatively impacts how quickly providers can hire staff, results in an even longer gap in services, and impedes the CSB's ability to place individuals in their program of choice. For example, when notified in September 2013 of the availability of funds for FY2014, providers experienced a lag due to hiring and space requirements, and were unable to begin services until January 2014.

We ask that the Human Services Council do everything you can to urge the Board of Supervisors to retain the \$1.3 million in the FY 2015 Advertised Budget for CSB employment and day support services.

Just last month, the Board of Supervisors issued a proclamation supporting and celebrating the inclusion of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in our community. We need to show these June 2014 special education graduates that, as a county, we mean what we say.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken Garnes", written over a horizontal line.

Ken Garnes
Chair

Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board